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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 297976

E.O. 12958: DECL: OADR
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SUBJECT: STATUS OF PKK PRESENCE IN RUSSIA

REFS: A) ANKARA 13507 (BEING REPEATED TO MOSCOW); B)
ANKARA 13634 (BEING REPEATED TO MOSCOW); C) ANKARA 2965;
D) TD 315/00535-94; E) TD 315/50753-94

11. (C) SUMMARY: TURKISH PRESS REPORTS THE PKK HAS SPONSORED ANOTHER MOSCOW CONFERENCE ON KURDISH SEPARATISM. DEPARTMENT WOULD BE CONCERNED WERE MOSCOW TO BECOME A CENTER OF OPERATIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY FOR PKK TERRORISM. PLEASE PROVIDE AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE CONFERENCE (ESPECIALLY ANY RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT OR FACILITATION) AND ANY READILY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PKK AND PRO-PKK FRONTS IN RUSSIA. DEPARTMENT ALSO INVITES RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE APPROPRIATENESS AND TACTICS OF A POSSIBLE DEMARCHE TO MOSCOW LAYING DOWN A MARKER ON OUR CONCERNS. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) REF A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY (BEING REPEATED TO MOSCOW) NOTED TURKISH PRESS REPORTS THAT ON OCTOBER 29 -KURDISH SEPARATISTS FROM TURKEY STARTED A THREE-DAY MEETING IN MOSCOW AIMED AT UNITING AND STRENGTHENING THE KURDISH MOVEMENT WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES. THE MEETING, SPONSORED BY THE PKK (KURDISTAN WORKERS' PARTY), IS PART OF A CAMPAIGN IN THE FORMER EAST BLOC. THE CONFERENCE WAS CLOSED TO TURKISH JOURNALISTS.- REF B PRESS SUMMARY QUOTED TURKISH PRESS REPORTS THAT THE CONFERENCE ENDED OCTOBER 31 HAVING ELECTED ONE YURI NEBIEV LEADER OF A -KURDISH UNION." TURKEY REPORTEDLY PROTESTED THE CONFERENCE VIA DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. (NB: TURKEY HAS NOT ASKED THE USG FOR SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE.)

THE THREAT

13. (S) DEPARTMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT PRO-PKK CONFERENCES OF THIS NATURE HAVE BEEN HELD PREVIOUSLY, AND THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE IN THE PAST ASSURED TURKEY THAT MOSCOW HAS NO INTENTION OF ESTABLISHING TIES WITH THE PKK (REF C). EXPERIENCE WITH THE PKK AND ITS FRONTS IN WESTERN EUROPE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE ORGANIZATION CAN POSE A DANGER EVEN WITHOUT THE FORMAL SUPPORT OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT. DEPARTMENT WOULD BE CONCERNED WERE MOSCOW TO BECOME A CENTER OF OPERATIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY FOR PKK TERRORISM (E.G., WEAPONS PROCUREMENT, TRAINING) -- REPORTS OF SUCH ACTIVITY HAVE SURFACED IN THE PAST (E.G. REFS D, E) -- OR WERE THE PKK TO MOBILIZE THE SERVICES OF RUSSIAN MAFIA GROUPS.

BACKGROUND ON THE PKK

14. (C) THE USG CONSIDERS THE PKK TO BE A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, NOT/NOT A LEGITIMATE POLITICAL MOVEMENT. OUR SUPPORT FOR TURKISH EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE PKK IS BASED NOT ONLY ON THE THREAT IT POSES TO TURKEY, BUT IN PART ON THE GROUP'S PAST AND PRESENT ACTIONS THREATENING AMERICAN LIVES AND INTERESTS. SINCE THE 1984 START OF ITS CAMPAIGN TO CARVE A KURDISH STATE OUT OF THE TURKISH SOUTHEAST, THE PKK HAS REPEATEDLY TAKEN AMERICANS HOSTAGE AND ATTACKED US ECONOMIC TARGETS. THE PKK'S ONGOING BOMBING CAMPAIGN AIMED AT TOURIST SITES IN

TURKEY ENDANGERS AMERICAN AS WELL AS TURKISH AND
PORT FORTHE PKK WAS FREQUENTLY ALLEGED.

15. (S) THE PKK'S POLITICAL WING, ERNK, MAINTAINS A
PRESENCE IN A NUMBER OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING
SOME WHICH BAN THE PKK. AFTER THE PKK ENGAGED IN
TERRORISM IN WESTERN EUROPE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1993,
FRANCE AND GERMANY BANNED THE GROUP AND DOZENS OF ITS
FRONTS. ERNK CLAIMS ITS INTERNATIONAL OFFICES ENGAGE
ONLY IN ORGANIZATIONAL AND INFORMATION ACTIVITY.
HOWEVER, THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT IN SOME COUNTRIES ERNK
OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN OPERATIONAL TERRORIST
SUPPORT ACTIVITY. DEPARTMENT SEEKS TO DISCOURAGE
GOVERNMENTS FROM DRAWING A FACILE DISTINCTION BETWEEN
"TERRORIST- PKK AND "POLITICAL" ERNK.

ACTION REQUESTED

16. (C) AT THIS STAGE, THE DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO
REVIEW THE LATEST READILY-AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON
PKK-RELATED ACTIVITY IN RUSSIA, WITH AN EYE TOWARD A
POSSIBLE DEMARCHE TO MOSCOW DETAILING OUR CONCERNS ABOUT
THE PKK AND ITS FRONTS. PLEASE REPORT ON THE NATURE,
SCOPE, AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE CITED IN REFS
A AND B, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ANY RUSSIAN
GOVERNMENTAL INVOLVEMENT OR FACILITATION. (WE WOULD
APPRECIATE ANY DETAILS THE TURKISH EMBASSY IN MOSCOW MAY
HAVE.) MORE BROADLY, DEPARTMENT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN
ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY ON ACTIVITIES AND
INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PKK, ERNK, OR OTHER PRO-PKK
SUPPORT OR FRONT ORGANIZATIONS IN RUSSIA.

17. (C) DEPARTMENT ALSO INVITES POST'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON
THE APPROPRIATENESS AND TACTICS OF A DEMARCHE TO MOSCOW
LAYING DOWN A MARKER ON THE PKK. AT THIS STAGE EMBASSY
SHOULD NOT/NOT APPROACH HOST GOVERNMENT FOR
INFORMATION. SLUG REPLY FOR S/CT (KOSNETT) AND ISCA.

CHRISTOPHER